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UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Djamel MOKTEFI (Algeria)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 4th plenary meeting, on 19 September 1997, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-second session the item entitled "United Nations common system" and to allocate it to the Fifth Committee.

2. The Fifth Committee considered the item at its 30th, 32nd, 33rd, 35th and 42nd meetings, on 17, 21 and 26 November and 2 and 16 December 1997. Statements and observations made in the course of the Committee's consideration of the item are reflected in the relevant summary records (A/C.5/52/SR.30, 32, 33, 35 and 42).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the International Civil Service Commission for the year 1997;[1]

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the system of performance awards or bonuses (A/52/439);

(c) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting comments by the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (A/C.5/52/18);

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[1] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/52/30).

Taking note of the statement of the Administrative Committee on Coordination,[3]

I

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF STAFF IN THE PROFESSIONAL AND HIGHER CATEGORIES

A. Examination of the Noblemaire principle and its application

Recalling section I.B of its resolution 44/198 of 21 December 1989 and section I.A of its resolution 51/216 of 18 December 1996, by which it reaffirmed that the Noblemaire principle should continue to serve as the basis of comparison between the United Nations emoluments and those of the highest-paying national civil service,

Recalling also its resolutions related to the study by the International Civil Service Commission of all aspects of the Noblemaire principle,[4]

1. Reconfirms the continued application of the Noblemaire principle;

2. Reaffirms the need to continue to ensure the competitiveness of the conditions of service of the United Nations common system;

3. Takes note with appreciation of the study by the International Civil Service Commission to identify the highest-paying national civil service;[5]

4. Takes note of the findings and recommendations of the Commission outlined in paragraph 47 of the addendum to its twenty-first annual report;[6]

5. Notes that it has not been possible to narrow existing differences on the scope of the study or the applicability of the Master Standard without substantially modifying the approved methodology;

6. Takes note of the findings of the Commission outlined in paragraph 54 (c) of its twenty-third annual report;[7]

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[3] A/C.5/52/28, annex.

[4] Resolution 46/191 A, sects. IV and VI; resolution 47/216, sect. II.C; resolution 48/224, sect. II.A and B; and resolution 49/223, sect. III.A.

[5] See Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/50/30), paras. 122-172, and addendum (A/50/30/Add.1).

[6] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 30, addendum (A/50/30/Add.1).

[7] Ibid., Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/52/30).

7. Recognizes that the actual process of changing comparators is a complex one, including implications for pensions, the currency of record and the location of the base of the United Nations remuneration system;

8. Acknowledges its option of margin management;

9. Takes note of the observation of the Commission in paragraph 47 (c) of the addendum to its twenty-first annual report,[6] and the views expressed thereon by Member States;

10. Requests the Commission to continue to monitor the situation and to report to the General Assembly when appropriate, and decides to keep these questions under review;

B. Evolution of the margin

Recalling the standing mandate from the General Assembly, in which the International Civil Service Commission is requested to continue its review of the relationship between the net remuneration of the United Nations staff in the Professional and higher categories in New York and that of the United States federal civil service employees in comparable positions in Washington, D.C. (referred to as "the margin"),

Notes that the margin between net remuneration of officials in the Professional and higher categories of the United Nations in New York and that of officials in comparable positions in the United States federal civil service for 1997 is 115.7;

C. Base/floor salary scale

Recalling section I.H of its resolution 44/198, by which it established a floor net salary level for staff in the Professional and higher categories by reference to the corresponding base net salary levels of officials in comparable positions serving at the base city of the comparator civil service (the federal civil service of the United States of America),

Approves, with effect from 1 March 1998, the revised base scale of gross and net salaries for staff in the Professional and higher categories contained in annex I to the present resolution and the consequential amendment to the Staff Regulations of the United Nations, as reflected in annex II to the present resolution;

D. Post adjustment at Geneva

Recalling section I.B of its resolution 50/208 of 23 December 1995 related to the establishment in 1996 of a single post adjustment index in respect of staff members whose duty station is Geneva,

Recalling also section I.E of its resolution 51/216, in which it reiterated its request to the International Civil Service Commission urgently to complete its study regarding the methodology for establishing a single post adjustment index for Geneva, and to complete the study needed to implement the single post adjustment at the earliest date, and no later than 1 January 1998,

1. Welcomes with appreciation the extensive information provided by the International Civil Service Commission and the organizations of the common system, as contained in the report of the Commission;[5]

2. Notes that a number of elements have been raised that had not previously been reported upon, or discussed by the General Assembly;

3. Requests the Commission to review those elements, inter alia, the possibility for staff members of the United Nations common system (a) to reside in France, (b) to travel to France and (c) to transport goods between France and Switzerland and the way in which transitional measures would be introduced under any option proposed by the Commission and approved by the General Assembly to make the application of the post adjustment system more equitable for all staff members whose duty station is Geneva, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-third session;

4. Invites the executive heads to bring this matter[6] to the attention of their governing bodies with a view to considering changes as necessary to their staff regulations and rules;

II

REMUNERATION OF THE GENERAL SERVICE AND OTHER LOCALLY RECRUITED CATEGORIES OF STAFF

A. Methodologies for surveys of best prevailing conditions of employment at headquarters and non-headquarters duty stations

Recalling section III of its resolution 47/216 of 23 December 1992, in which it endorsed the reaffirmation by the International Civil Service Commission of the Flemming principle as the basis for determining the conditions of service of the General Service and related categories,

Recalling also section II of its resolution 51/216, in which it requested the Commission, as part of its review of the methodologies for salary setting for staff in the General Service and other locally recruited categories, inter alia:

(a) To resolve, to the extent possible, inconsistencies between that methodology and the one which is applied pursuant to the Noblemaire principle, inter alia, by examining the question of overlap in remuneration between the two categories;

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[5] Ibid., paras. 63-102 and annexes VII-XIV.

(b) To study the feasibility of increasing the weight of public-sector employers in the salary surveys at headquarters duty stations;

(c) To submit a report based on the review of the methodologies to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session,

1. Reaffirms that the Flemming principle should continue to serve as the basis for determining the conditions of service of the General Service and related categories;

2. Endorses the conclusions of the International Civil Service Commission, and the refinements and modifications to the methodology set out in paragraphs 126 to 131 of its report,[7] noting that the revisions to the methodologies will be implemented as from 1 January 1998;

3. Notes that at the conclusion of the next round of headquarters General Service salary surveys, the Commission will continue to review all aspects of the methodology for salary setting for staff in the General Service and other locally recruited categories;

B. Non-pensionable component

Noting that the review of the non-pensionable component was carried out by the Working Group established by the International Civil Service Commission with the participation of the representatives of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board and that the Standing Committee of the Pension Board concurred with the Commission's decisions regarding changes to the procedures used for determining it,

Endorses the modifications decided on by the International Civil Service Commission regarding the various aspects of the non-pensionable component and transitional measures as outlined in paragraph 139 of its report;[7]

C. Review of the basis for the dependent children's allowance

Noting that the floor amount for the children's allowance for the staff in the General Service and related categories is currently based on 3 per cent of the mid-point of the local salary scale,

Taking note of the views expressed by Member States,

1. Endorses the conclusions and decisions of the International Civil Service Commission as contained in paragraph 150 of its report;[7]

2. Welcomes the Commission's intention to review this question further in its 1999 work programme;

III

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE APPLICABLE TO ALL CATEGORIES OF STAFF

A. Education grant: review of the methodology for determining the level of the grant

Recalling section IV of its resolution 47/216 and section IV of its resolution 51/216, in which it endorsed the revised methodology for the determination of the education grant,

Acknowledging that the methodology for determining the level of the education grant introduced in 1992 has functioned reasonably well,

Noting the review of the methodology by the International Civil Service Commission based on the experience of its application during the past three reviews of the level of the grant,

1. Endorses the modifications to the methodology by the International Civil Service Commission, as contained in paragraph 163 of its report,[7] and notes that the revised methodology will be taken into account beginning with the 1998 biennial review of the education grant;

2. Decides to delegate to the Chairman of the Commission the authority requested in paragraph 164 of the report of the Commission;[7]

B. Performance management

Recalling section I.C of its resolution 51/216 and its request to the International Civil Service Commission to provide general comments on the concept of performance awards and bonuses to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session,

Recognizing the differing organizational strategies and cultures prevailing in the United Nations common system, and considering that a flexible approach to performance management would be desirable,

1. Welcomes the comprehensive information on performance management provided by the International Civil Service Commission in paragraphs 167 to 219 of its report,[7] and in particular the guidance and recommendations contained in paragraphs 213 and 219;

2. Decides to consider the report of the Secretary-General on a system of performance awards and bonuses[9] under the item entitled "Human resources management";

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[9] A/52/439.

3. Invites the executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations common system to develop their performance management programmes within the parameters set by the Commission in paragraphs 213 and 219 of its report;[7]

C. Appointments of limited duration

Recalling section V of its resolution 51/216, in which it requested the International Civil Service Commission to continue its work on the issue of appointments of limited duration without delay,

Endorses the principles and guidelines for the use of appointments of limited duration, and the decisions of the International Civil Service Commission as contained in paragraph 249 of its report;[7]

D. Standards of travel and per diem

Recalling its decision 51/465 of 3 April 1997, in which it requested the International Civil Service Commission to review, at the earliest opportunity, taking into account the reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions[10] and the Joint Inspection Unit,[11] the question of travel entitlements of staff of the United Nations common system,

Having considered paragraphs 250 to 276 of the report of the Commission,[7]

1. Takes note of the observations of the International Civil Service Commission as contained in paragraph 275 (a) of its report;[7]

2. Invites the Commission to continue its consideration of this question;

E. Mission subsistence allowance

Recalling section IV of its resolution 51/218 E of 17 June 1997, in which it requested the International Civil Service Commission to develop a proposal to provide a post allowance and separate maintenance allowance for those personnel who leave their families at their home duty station while they are on mission assignment,

Notes the intention of the International Civil Service Commission to address this matter in 1998, and requests it to submit a report on the question to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session;

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[10] Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/47/7 and Add.1-17), document A/47/7/Add.5, and A/49/952.

[11] A/50/692.

F. Staff participation in the work of the Commission

Recalling its resolution 51/216,

1. Recalls its request to the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System and the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations to resume their participation in the work of the International Civil Service Commission in a spirit of cooperation and non-confrontation;

2. Takes note with appreciation of the progress made in this regard through the establishment by the Commission of a Working Group on the Consultative Process and Working Arrangements, comprising members of the Commission and representatives of the organizations and staff bodies, which will meet in January 1998;

G. New directions in human resources management

Recalling section IX of its resolution 51/216, in which it requested the International Civil Service Commission to take the lead in analysing new approaches in the human resources management field so as to develop standards, methods and arrangements that will respond to the specific needs of the organizations of the United Nations common system, and to report to the General Assembly thereon at its fifty-third session,

1. Welcomes the initiative taken by the International Civil Service Commission to hold a forum on new directions in human resources management in 1997;

2. Also welcomes the intention of the Commission to submit in 1998 a comprehensive report on new approaches to human resources management;

H. Gender balance in the common system

Recalling section VI of its resolution 47/216, in which it urged the United Nations common system to introduce a coherent plan for improving the status of women in each organization,

1. Takes note of the intention of the International Civil Service Commission to submit a report on the representation of women in 1998 which will include ways of improving the situation;

2. Also takes note of the intention of the Commission to continue to report on a regular basis both on the extent of implementation of previous recommendations in this area and on new initiatives proposed or introduced by the organizations to enhance the status of women in the common system.

ANNEX I

Salary scale for the Professional and higher categories showing annual gross salaries and net equivalents after application of staff assessment*

(United States dollars)

(Effective 1 March 1998)

Level		STEPS I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV
USG	Gross	147 420														
	Net D	102 130														
	Net S	91 883														
ASG	Gross	133 994														
	Net D	93 671														
	Net S	84 821														
Director																
D-2	Gross	109 741	112 164	114 591	117 016	119 442	121 869									
	Net D	78 390	79 919	81 447	82 975	84 504	86 032									
	Net S	72 056	73 338	74 615	75 890	77 167	78 443									
Principal Officer																
D-1	Gross	97 119	99 168	101 216	103 261	105 310	107 358	109 407	111 476	113 552						
	Net D	70 324	71 633	72 942	74 249	75 558	76 867	78 176	79 485	80 793						
	Net S	65 012	66 156	67 299	68 440	69 583	70 726	71 869	72 976	74 068						
Senior Officer																
P-5	Gross	85 685	87 516	89 347	91 192	93 046	94 898	96 751	98 605	100 457	102 310	104 164	106 016	107 869		
	Net D	62 983	64 168	65 352	66 537	67 721	68 905	70 089	71 274	72 457	73 641	74 826	76 009	77 194		
	Net S	58 486	59 570	60 653	61 705	62 740	63 773	64 807	65 842	66 875	67 909	68 944	69 977	71 011		
First Officer																
P-4	Gross	70 619	72 382	74 141	75 913	77 700	79 483	81 269	83 054	84 839	86 623	88 406	90 197	92 003	93 811	95 619
	Net D	53 196	54 353	55 507	56 660	57 817	58 971	60 126	61 281	62 436	63 590	64 744	65 901	67 055	68 210	69 365
	Net S	49 523	50 584	51 643	52 700	53 758	54 814	55 871	56 928	57 985	59 041	60 096	61 150	62 158	63 166	64 175
Second Officer																
P-3	Gross	57 720	59 351	60 984	62 613	64 246	65 889	67 542	69 197	70 851	72 506	74 159	75 824	77 500	79 176	80 854
	Net D	44 669	45 754	46 839	47 923	49 008	50 093	51 178	52 263	53 348	54 434	55 518	56 603	57 687	58 772	59 858
	Net S	41 685	42 683	43 682	44 679	45 678	46 675	47 670	48 667	49 662	50 658	51 654	52 648	53 640	54 632	55 626
Associate Officer																
P-2	Gross	46 458	47 883	49 305	50 728	52 149	53 572	54 996	56 453	57 915	59 372	60 830	62 291			
	Net D	37 035	38 006	38 976	39 946	40 916	41 886	42 857	43 826	44 798	45 768	46 737	47 709			
	Net S	34 741	35 622	36 500	37 380	38 258	39 138	40 017	40 909	41 804	42 696	43 588	44 482			
Assistant Officer																
P-1	Gross	35 382	36 718	38 051	39 386	40 719	42 052	43 388	44 722	46 081	47 449					
	Net D	29 317	30 251	31 183	32 116	33 048	33 979	34 914	35 845	36 777	37 710					
	Net S	27 655	28 515	29 372	30 230	31 087	31 944	32 804	33 661	34 508	35 353					

D = Rate applicable to staff members with a dependent spouse or child.
S = Rate applicable to staff members with no dependent spouse or child.

* This scale will be implemented in conjunction with a consolidation of 3.1 per cent of post adjustment. There will be consequential adjustments in the post adjustment indices and multipliers at all duty stations, effective 1 March 1998. Thereafter, changes in post adjustment classifications will be effected on the basis of the movements of the consolidated post adjustment indices.

ANNEX II

Amendments to the Staff Regulations of the United Nations

Regulation 3.3

Replace the table in paragraph (b) (1) with the following:

Total assessable payments (United States dollars)	Staff assessment rates used in conjunction with gross base salaries (Percentage)	
	Staff member with a dependent spouse or a dependent child	Staff member with neither a dependent spouse nor a dependent child
First 15 000 per year	9.0	11.8
Next 5 000 per year	18.1	24.6
Next 5 000 per year	21.5	27.1
Next 5 000 per year	24.9	31.7
Next 5 000 per year	27.5	33.4
Next 10 000 per year	30.1	35.8
Next 10 000 per year	31.8	38.2
Next 10 000 per year	33.5	38.8
Next 10 000 per year	34.4	40.0
Next 15 000 per year	35.3	41.3
Next 20 000 per year	36.1	44.5
Remaining assessable payments	37.0	47.6